

stand quite alone in my opinion is evident; for if you turn to page 385, vol. ii. of *THE BUILDER*, you will perceive that your correspondent, "G.R.F.," quotes Mr. Hosking and another authority in support of the views I hold on the subject.

To those of your readers who are in the habit of perusing the pages of a certain journal, it will be remembered that some remarks have been made by a writer on the propriety or correctness of a comparison made by me in a former letter, between the windows of the Royal Exchange and picture-frames, and who is pleased to attribute the "questionable" comparison, to the "lively sallies of a funny imagination which some endeavour to palm upon us for knock down argument." What precise meaning the writer attaches to the term "knock down argument" I am at a loss to imagine; I would intimate, however, that I neither had the intention of knocking down the windows of the Exchange, nor to commit a breach of the peace on the persons of those who might differ from me. Is the writer serious, when he tells us, that if dressings similar to those of the windows of the Exchange were to surround a picture, they would still be termed window-dressings? Or supposing the same kind were to surround or ornament a niche, will he contend that they would still be called window-dressings? The writer very evidently, in attempting to prove too much, has over-shot the mark; and I have no doubt that the generality of your readers rightly judged, that the comparison was never intended to be translated literally—to the very letter—but, for the especial benefit of the writer, and I am sorry his dulness of comprehension should require it, I would state, that the heaviness and grossness in detail—the over-charged ornament—fully merit the comparison I made, if only for exaggeration and triviality. Though I cannot return the compliment to the writer that he has paid me, that of using knock down argument, he despatches the windows of the Exchange in such a strain as the following:—"Compared with the frigid things just alluded to," meaning the ordinary samples of window-dressings, "the windows of the Exchange are what the luxuriant vegetation of the tropical climates is to the eternal ice of the polar regions. They bespeak fullness and spontaneity of ideas, gusto and colour, and are relished with pains-taking—no, there we are wrong, not pains-taking, but pleasure-taking earnestness in the task." I am in doubt whether the luxuriance of imagination ought to be attributed most to the architect or writer. It is a great pity that the fulness of the architect's ideas were spent solely on the upstairs windows; it is thought by persons possessed of very little luxuriance of imagination, that the shopocracy would have been benefited by a share, and if a little more "pleasure-taking earnestness" had been expended on them, the building would have been improved; at the present time they look any thing but *pleasing* when compared with the vegetation above.

I would merely add, that the Exchange as a whole presents not a single trace of genuine artistic feeling. If the purpose of architecture is to produce emotions of the sublime, the distribution of the mass is the aim of the master-mind. Detail alone can never produce grandeur; and it speaks not a little for the intrinsic merit of the Exchange that critics have generally been silent on the main point—confining their attention chiefly to the windows and sculpture.

It is this harmonious and effective distribution of masses, that has raised Barry to the proud eminence he deservedly occupies; at the same time it must be allowed he studies elegance of detail. What an opportunity was lost for effect in the view, from the quadrangle of the Exchange, of the tower, and what a positive blemish it is under the present aspect.

Critics have now got into a habit of continually harping upon *originality*; in my opinion, it would be better were they first to point out the distinction between originality and caprice, and to fix the line of demarcation between them. Originality has taken the place of simplicity. A few years back the cry was simplicity; now the public want something new, and this has been changed for originality. I admit, however, that architects have been far more inclined to copy than to study.

I fear these remarks will not possess much

interest to some of your readers; there are many, however, who will no doubt expect some kind of explanation. Not daring at the present time to trespass further on your valuable space, I beg leave still to sign myself, though many may be inclined to argue my right to the name of,

London, Jan. 14, 1845. SCRUTATOR.

[Relative to the first part of "Scrutator's" letter we are glad to say that our experience of mankind in general, and of architects in particular, leads us to entertain a very different opinion from his. In recent cases where architects have been called in to make the selection, the result has been entirely satisfactory.—En.]

VERBAL CONTRACTS.

Sir,—A country builder has made his own plans and specifications for some buildings he has erected, with which his employer, now they are finished, is not satisfied, although the plans were devised from to suit his wishes, and additions made. There was a verbal agreement that they were to be erected for a certain sum, which his employer now says is too much money, yet he will not agree to let a surveyor value the same, but says he will keep half the sum so agreed for, for twelve months, as also the amount of the extra work. I wish you would inform me in your next which is the best and most expeditious way of settling such an unpleasant affair, and you will oblige yours,

Jan. 28, 1845. X. Y. Z.

[Place the matter in the hands of a respectable solicitor.—En.]

COMPETITION.

Sir,—In October last, I advertised for designs for laying out a plot of ground adapted for building in this borough, and in consequence of such advertisement an anonymous correspondent copied and sent me a letter, signed "Scrutator," which had appeared in your journal of the 31st of August last, recommending the adoption of a new mode of decision on the merits of the designs, by making the competing architects the judges.

There appeared to me to be so much of good sense as well as justice to those who were willing to compete and have their merit tested by so many competent judges, by the adoption of this mode, that I at once determined to try the experiment, and I have the pleasure to tell you that I am well satisfied with the result.

I had upwards of forty designs sent to me,

MISTAKES IN ESTIMATES.

Sir,—As I am referred to in Mr. Sugden's letter of last week respecting the quantities of Herne Hill Church, I shall feel obliged if you will insert the following statement relative thereto. At the time the drawings and specifications were open for the inspection of the builders, Mr. Alexander, the architect, was out of town, and I went to his office for the purpose of taking the quantities for some clients of mine. I commenced doing so, and took off the bricklayer's and slater's works only. On my return, the following day, Mr. A. had arrived, when I told him it was impossible to have the estimates delivered at the time stated in the advertisement, and wished him to postpone it for a week; with this request he said he could not comply, but stated, he had himself taken out the quantities, and they were correct. Of course I communicated this to my employers, and they agreed to accept the quantities taken out by Mr. A. I then made copies of them for the several parties, but I never took a single dimension except for the bricklayer's and slater's works. I am not able to state whether Mr. Sugden is correct as to the deficiency of stone, but he is as to the scantling of the buttresses. There were other builders who tendered for the church beside those for whom I was concerned, and they adopted the same course, viz., copied Mr. A.'s quantities. I have only to add, that I was not paid for taking the quantities, but merely for making the copies.

I am, &c. W. M. BROOMFIELD.

118, Waterloo Road, Lambeth,
Jan. 27, 1845.

and many of them displayed very considerable talent, and I confess, that on opening them, it appeared to me that so many were nearly equally balanced in point of merit, that it must be indeed difficult for one or two judges to arrive at a correct decision; and the result of the votes has fully confirmed me in this opinion.

With a view of shewing this, and also of satisfying the competitors who attended to give their votes, that such votes have been correctly recorded, I beg to send you the mottoes to those designs which obtained votes, with the names of the competitors who voted for each, that you may, if you think proper, publish this in your next journal.—

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,
J. J. BLENDY.

Land, King's Road, Reading,
Jan. 29th, 1845.

| Motto on Design. | Competitors who voted in favour of its being entitled to 1st Premium. | Competitors who voted in favour of its being entitled to 2nd Premium. | Total No. of Votes. |
|-------------------------------|---|--|---------------------|
| A "Profit and Prospect" | F. Cooper, Bath J. Billing, Reading J. O. Cooper, Reading J. C. Gilbert, Nottingham J. Barnett, London R. W. Wright, Hackney | J. Cade, London | 6. |
| Je ne cherche qu'un | A. Artis, London T. Rumble, Reading J. Cade, London | W. A. Papworth, London | 4 |
| Via Regia | W. B. Hays, London Messrs. Hall & Westmacott, London | D. S. Shearman, London J. O. Cooper, Reading | 4 |
| Mulum in parvo | J. E. Gill, Southampton J. Austin, Bedford | | 3 |
| Spero | J. W. Papworth, London W. Brown, Reading | W. F. Poulton, Reading | 3 |
| Nunc aut nunquam | W. Brown, Watford | J. F. Gill, Southampton G. Seratton, Reading J. C. Gilbert, Nottingham J. Barnett, London | 3 |
| Optimo | W. F. Poulton, Reading | J. W. Papworth, London | 3 |
| Foy en tout | W. A. Papworth, London | W. B. Hays, London R. W. Wright, Hackney A. C. Bean, Hammermith W. Brown, Reading | 3 |
| Nil desperandum | | | 3 |
| Virtutes fortuna coronant | D. S. Shearman, London F. Anderson, London | | 2 |
| Non quo sed quomodo | S. Noble, Greenwich H. Drake, Reading | F. Cooper, Bath A. B. Wilcox, London F. Saunders, London | 2 |
| Atal veritas | H. W. May, London | H. Drake, Reading J. Billing, Reading T. Rumble, Reading W. Brown, Watford | 2 |
| Ex facto jus oritur | | | 2 |
| Consilio, conquiesco | | | 2 |
| Dum vivimus vivamus | A. C. Bean, Hammermith G. Seratton, Reading | | 1 |
| Tempus eduxit et gravis vivas | | | 1 |
| Nec parvis suto | | S. Noble, Greenwich | 1 |
| Semper idem | | A. Artis, London | 1 |

MR. TITE.—We understand that the directors of the Havre and Rouen Railway have appointed Mr. Tite (the architect of the Royal Exchange) to superintend the erection of the Havre station, and that many of the other stations on the same line have been built under his direction.

THE ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH from London to Portsmouth, by the South-Western Railway, is just completed. On Saturday last it hisped its first sentence. A shareholder at Nine Elms asked the keeper at Portsmouth—"How's the wind?" He was answered on the instant,—"South by west."